

Message Text

SECRET

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17

ACTION SS-25

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O 210817Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5080

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SEOUL 0476

EXDIS

MIL ADDEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

DEPT PLS PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD-FOR ASST SECY HABIB AND AMB
SNEIDER

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PARM KS CA FR

SUBJECT: ROK REPROCESSING

REF: STATE 014176

1. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR HAS GIVEN CHARGE FOLLOWING MORE DETAILED
RUNDOWN THAN CONTAINED PARA 4 REFTEL OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH
FONMIN PARK TONG CHIN, WHICH TOOK PLACE LATE AFTERNOON JANUARY
20.

2. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR LEFT INFORMAL PAPER WITH FONMIN CONTAINING
CANADIAN POSITION AS STATED PARA 1 REFTEL. FONMIN RESPONDED THAT
IT SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE AT THIS TIME TO GIVE CATEGORICAL ASSURANCE
OF NATURE GOC REQUESTING. AS GOC PREVIOUSLY ADVISED, ROKG HAS
INDEFINITELY POSTPONED SIGNING OF FORMAL AGREEMENT ON FRENCH
REPROCESSING PLANT. FONMIN MADE CLEAR HE WAS REFERRING TO
GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT AS DISTINCT FROM COMMERCIAL
ARRANGEMENTS, WHICH COMPLETED. HE CONTINUED THAT CANCELLATION OF
REPROCESSING PLANT PURCHASE DEPENDS ON OUTCOME OF NEGOTIATIONS

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WITH US REPRESENTATIVES WHO DUE TO ARRIVE IN SEOUL JAN 22.

3. FONMIN SAID THAT ROKG HOPES CANADA WILL STILL BE PREPARED TO SIGN CANDU AGREEMENT IN EXPECTATION THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH US WILL HAVE SATISFACTORY OUTCOME. IF NOT, HE HOPED CANADA WOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT A PROPOSAL INVOLVING INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT ON CANDU SIGNING AND NEW ARRANGEMENT FOR SIGNATURE IN THE FUTURE. IF CANADA SHOULD CHOOSE LATTER COURSE, ROKG WOULD EXPECT NOT TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR INCONVENIENCE OR PENALTIES, PARTICULARLY FINANCIAL PENALTIES, ARISING FROM POSTPONEMENT, WHICH ROKG DOES NOT CONSIDER IT CAUSED.

4. FONMIN TOLD CANADIAN AMBASSADOR THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO REFERENCE DURING CANDU NEGOTIATIONS TO THIRD COUNTRY COOPERATION AND ROKG THEREFORE "ASTONISHED BY LAST MINUTE CANADIAN ULTIMATUM" REGARDING FRENCH REPROCESSING PLANT. ROKG THOUGHT THAT BY RATIFYING NPT AND CONCLUDING SPECIAL SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT WITH IAEA, IT HAD OFFERED ASSURANCES SUFFICIENT TO PERSUADE CANADIANS OF ROKG'S PEACEFUL INTENTIONS.

5. FONMIN SAID ROKG HAS TAKEN NOTE OF CANADIAN POSITION AND REITERATED STATEMENT THAT ROKG HAS DECIDED TO POSTPONE COMPLETION OF FRENCH DEAL AND TO NEGOTIATE WITH USG FOR SUITABLE ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS. HE SAID FINAL DECISION WOULD DEPEND ENTIRELY ON OUTCOME OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH US OFFICIALS. THIS MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME, PERHAPS SEVERAL MONTHS. IN MEANTIME, ROKG WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF CANADA WOULD ACCEPT ROKG'S GOOD INTENTIONS AND MEET JANUARY 26 DEADLINE FOR CANDU SIGNING.

6. FONMIN NOTED THAT ROKG HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH FRANCE OVER LONG PERIOD AND HAS ALREADY MADE DOWN PAYMENT FOR ACQUISITION OF FRENCH FACILITY. SOLE REMAINING HURDLE IS SIGNATURE OF BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH FRENCH GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD SURELY EXPECT ROKG TO GO AHEAD. TO CANCEL FRENCH DEAL WOULD PLACE ROKG IN VERY DIFFICULT POSITION. HE THEREFORE HOPED CANADIAN FRIENDS WOULD HELP FIND SOLUTION TO PRESENT IMPASSE.

7. IN CLOSING FONMIN REMARKED THAT IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR ROKG TO STOMACH A DEMAND "TO CANCEL FIRST AND DISCUSS ALTERNATIVES AFTERWARD." HE SAID THERE IS SERIOUS PROBLEM OF FACE INVOLVED AND COMPLAINED THAT WHOLE AFFAIR IS "DIPLOMATIC MESS," WHICH WOULD
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HAVE BEEN AVOIDED WITH MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS.

8. COMMENT: CANADIAN AMBASSADOR DOES NOT BELIEVE FOREGOING WILL MOVE GOC TO SIGN CANDU AGREEMENT BY JANUARY 26 DEADLINE, AND ANTICIPATES INSTRUCTIONS TO SO INFORM ROKG. HE IS WELL AWARE OF US POSITION AS OUTLINED PARA 5 REFTEL. FONMIN'S ANGUISH AS REFLECTED PARA 7 REFLECTS REAL PROBLEMS FACING KOREAN OFFICIALS, I.E., HOW TO PERSUADE PRESIDENT PARK TO ACCEPT DECISION TO CANCEL

WITH MINIMUM LOSS OF FACE.
ERICSON

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NNN

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